WSU Small Farms Program Wins Grants to Support Disadvantaged Farmers

PUYALLUP, Wash. – Washington State University’s Small Farms Program has been awarded two U.S. Department of Agriculture grants to support and assist beginning and disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Together, the grants will support and strengthen the Small Farms Program’s innovative immigrant farmer program.

According to WSU Extension Small Farms educator Doug Collins, the two grants will help the statewide program achieve its long-term goals.

“Our statewide team is continually working to help farmers increase financial stability and profitability, improve soil management and water quality, and increase their access to educational networks and public agricultural programs,” Collins said. “Both of these grants are aimed at achieving those goals with new and immigrant farmers.”

The nearly $525,000 USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program grant is targeted at cultivating new generation and immigrant farmers within the state. WSU is providing more than $132,000 in matching funds. The funds will be used to improve curricula and delivery of the program’s popular Cultivating Success courses for farmers, provide advanced training through a series of in-person and online short courses, improve the state farmer mentor and internship program, and develop a tool kit for new farmers and landowners about alternative land tenure strategies.

The $300,000 USDA Outreach and Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers grant will be applied to helping immigrant farmers improve production, marketing, and land tenure strategies. The funds will be applied to providing the Cultivating Success courses and additional production workshops and field demonstrations to Latino, Hmong, and East African immigrant farmers. The team will also provide individualized consultations, facilitate farmer-to-farmer mentoring, and develop novel educational tools for reaching non-English speaking audiences.
The Small Farms Program has two specialists who focus on working with Latino farm operators, and one specialist who is working with Hmong and East African immigrant farmers primarily in the Puget Sound region.

The Small Farms Program is a part of the WSU Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources.

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